



Notes from LEAD Editor

*This month in **LEAD** you will find a number of articles that focus on various aspects of teambuilding. For instance, the article "Keys to Building Performance Driven Work Teams" illustrates valuable components needed for high-performance work teams. You will also find useful articles discussing team cooperation, communication, guidelines, and empowerment. We encourage you to use and share the ideas you find in **LEAD** with friends and colleagues.*

KEYS TO BUILDING PERFORMANCE DRIVEN WORK TEAMS

Promoting teamwork is a top priority for many leaders. The benefits are clear: increased productivity, improved customer service, more flexible systems, and employee empowerment. To effectively implement teams, leaders need a clear understanding of the key ingredients of a team. Here is a list of seven important parts of high-performance teams:

COMMITMENT. Commitment to the purpose and values of an organization provides a clear sense of direction. To enhance team commitment, leaders might consider inviting each work team to develop team mission, vision, and value statements that are in alignment with those of the organization, but reflect the individuality of the team.

CONTRIBUTION. The power of an effective team is in direct proportion to the skills members possess and the initiative members expend. The more individuals feel like part of a team, the more they contribute; and, the more members contribute, the more they feel like part of the team. To enhance feelings of inclusion, leaders need to keep work team members informed, solicit their input, and support an atmosphere of collectivity.

COMMUNICATION. For a work group to reach its full potential, members must be able to say what they think, ask for help, share new or unpopular ideas, and risk making mistakes. This can only happen in an atmosphere where team members show concern, trust one another, and focus on solutions, not problems. Communication – when it is friendly, open, and positive – plays a vital role in creating such cohesiveness.

COOPERATION. In increasingly complex organizations, success depends upon the degree of interdependence recognized within the team.

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CONFLICT MANAGEMENT. It is inevitable that teams of bright, diverse employees will experience conflict from time to time. The problem is not that differences exist, but in how they are managed. If leaders help work teams to manage conflict effectively, the team will be able to maintain trust and tap the collective power of the team.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT. Teams must not only respond to change, but actually initiate it. Leaders can provide the security necessary for teams to take risks and the tools for them to innovate. They can also reduce resistance to change by providing vision and information, and by modeling a positive attitude themselves.

CONNECTIONS. When a work team is connected to the organization, members discuss team performance in relationship to corporate priorities, customer feedback, and quality measures. They consider team needs in light of what's good for the whole organization and what will best serve joint objectives. Teams that connect well with other work groups typically think of those groups as "internal customers." They treat requests from these colleagues with the same respect shown to external customers.

-Adapted from "7 Keys to Building Great Workteams,"
by Suzanne Willis, from Team Building Inc.





CREATING AN OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP TEAM

As the business world becomes more complex and interdependent, executives cannot afford to lead in isolation. Instead, they must tap into the collective knowledge and expertise of colleagues by creating real teamwork at all levels of the organization. Leaders need to build truly effective leadership teams. Try to keep in mind the following ideas while creating teams:

- **Teams need to have clear and stable boundaries and interdependent team tasks.**
- **Team leaders need to create organizational conditions that facilitate teamwork and link team purposes to those of the broader organization.**
- **Team members need to be informed in a variety of subjects. The diversity of opinions and thoughts will help examine all the different options and concerns of the organization.**
- **Team members do what they promise. Reliability among members and leaders is key.**
- **Encourage dialogue among the team members, organization, management, and other teams. This will help the overall achievement of goals and ideas.**
- **Leaders need to create structures and arrange for organizational support. This will increase the ability for teams to excel.**

-Adapted from "Creating an Outstanding Leadership Team," from *Management Review*, February 2000

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6 WAYS TO DEVELOP A TOP STAFF

To develop a staff into a team that does the best possible job for the organization, keep in mind the following information:

- Treat everyone in the organization with courtesy and respect.
- Shared knowledge helps build cooperation and trust.
- Strive for an organization that encourages diversity. Hire and recruit a mix of employees, with differing skills, education, knowledge, opinions, and backgrounds.
- If you need help, reach out to your professional community. Someone, somewhere, somehow will know how to help you.
- Realize that fairness establishes your credibility.
- Never be too busy to laugh. Nothing gets people through a crisis like a good laugh -- and a manager who's willing to enjoy it with them.

-Adapted from Gene H. Cheatham, writing in *Association Source*, Florida Society of Association Executives, 1211 Serooran Blvd., Casselberry, FL 32707.

RULES AND PRINCIPLES OF BRAINSTORMING

The idea behind brainstorming is to gain a large number of diverse ideas or solutions related to some goal or problem. Brainstorming also serves a second function of bringing people to express themselves without fear of being criticized. To fulfill the function of brainstorming, a few simple rules and principles should be adhered to:

1. **Do not criticize an idea.** Every idea is acceptable, even if it sounds silly. Remember, we're trying to gain a large number of ideas. Criticism tends to quiet some people. As a leader, it is your responsibility to inform the group of the rule and to encourage it.
2. **Encourage piggybacking.** Piggybacking is picking up on an idea and altering it a little, or taking something away, or even expressing the exact opposite. You'll be surprised to find that the strangest thing you ever heard can turn into a practical idea just by applying a little piggybacking.
3. **Keep things moving -- the faster the better.** As a leader, you should keep the brainstorming moving. The best way is to save your own ideas for a dull moment.
4. **Don't forget to keep a record of the ideas expressed.** The group leader lists each idea as quickly as possible. Hesitation in recording the ideas sometimes gives the impression of disapproval.
5. **Add an encouraging word when a shy or withdrawn person offers an idea.** This positive reinforcement will make it more likely that they will contribute again.
6. **Evaluation comes only after as many ideas as possible are brainstormed.** Then the group goes back over the list to determine which projects or ideas are valuable.

-Adapted from "Brainstorming," at the University of Omaha at Nebraska, www.unomaha.edu

